



## **Inaugural Address**

**by**

**His Excellency The Most Hon. Dr. Patrick Linton Allen, ON, CD**

**on the Occasion of His Installation as Governor-General of Jamaica**

**King's House Thursday**

**February 26, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.**

### **INTRODUCTION**

I acknowledge, with humility, the honor that has been conferred on me and I wish to express my gratitude for this recognition. I also wish to acknowledge my keen awareness of the responsibility that comes with this position and assure you of my intention to wholeheartedly discharge the duties that accompany this Office.

### **THANKS AND APPRECIATION**

In expressing thanks and appreciation, I must firstly recognize the Eternal God of grace and glory who orders the course of our lives, equips and places us in positions where we may honour Him by giving service to His people.

We owe a debt of gratitude to the five Governors-General who have served our country with dignity, impartiality and an unswerving commitment to high standards. Each, in his own unique way, has contributed to the building of our nation. I must single out my predecessor, The Most Honourable Professor Sir Kenneth Hall and The Most Honourable Lady Hall, for the gracious and wise leadership that they have given these past 3 years and particularly their commitment to the development of the youth in Jamaica.

I wish to thank our Prime Minister the Honourable Orette Bruce Golding and his Cabinet for the confidence which they have expressed in my ability to function in this high Office at this time when our country faces serious challenges.

I must also express my gratitude to the Leader of the Opposition The Most Honourable Portia Simpson Miller and her colleagues for their kind words of support. I must also express sincere appreciation to the many Jamaicans, both here at home and in the Diaspora, and others who have expressed their exuberant and solid support for my appointment. Mrs. Allen and I thank you for your affirmation, your prayers and your good wishes.

On a personal note, it would be remiss of me not to mention the persons in this audience and elsewhere, who have contributed, in one way or another, to my education, training and well being: my late parents, members of my immediate and extended family, church, school, community leaders, supportive and loyal friends and many others – all of whom have helped to nurture and mold me into the person I am today.

## **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNOR-GENERAL**

As Governor-General I will carry out the functions of the Office as dictated by the Constitution of Jamaica, and in the process, ensure that within the constraints of those duties, my engagement in our national life will be relevant and timely.

My appointment to this Office has demonstrated that we are indeed one people and that anyone in Jamaica, despite race, color, creed, religion, or economic station can rise to the

highest position. This is a Jamaican dream that has again been realized today. Marcus Garvey was indeed right when he said “...we can accomplish what we will.”

The lesson is clear, that whatever your station in life, whatever your calling, and whatever you do, make ‘Excellence’ your watchword, for in the execution of the seemingly trivial tasks and common rounds of our daily lives, we disclose our true character by which we will be judged. For this reason, if for none other, our mantra should always be: “Only the best is good enough”.

As a boy from a modest family in the far reaches of the Portland community of Fruitful Vale, I have taken one step at a time toward my goals: teaching, pastoring, counselling and administering, not wondering where the next step would lead me. In each case, I have dedicated my best efforts and my highest endeavours to serving my people with a sense of pride. This I will continue to do.

During my tenure as Governor-General, my travels will take me all across the Island and I will meet with many of you – persons from various age groups and walks of life, persons who give service in the public and private sectors, persons in the political, religious, social, educational, cultural and professional spheres. As I meet with each of you, learn about you and learn from you, I will be a Governor-General for all of you – a Governor-General for all Jamaica.

Jamaica now needs the service of all its citizens. In the final analysis, I ask as our late National Hero the Right Honourable Norman Manley did in an address to the nation on November 10, 1957,

*“Who, with blood in his veins and pride in his heart, would not give himself to service, when to serve is to help build your own country, for its own people, for your children and mine?”*

## **OUR JAMAICA TODAY**

Globally we are in turbulent times, uncertain times, the worst of times, times “that try men’s soul”. Nationally we are ‘between a rock and a hard place’. Jamaicans are hurting - economically, financially, socially, mentally and spiritually. While I do not wish to dwell on the

gloomy situation into which we have found ourselves, it is necessary that we recognize fully our predicament, in order to commit ourselves to a way of escape.

The economic downturn we are experiencing here at home is helping to fuel unemployment, the spectre of joblessness, and the deprivation of personal dignity on those who are affected. Should not this challenge us to find alternate ways of providing for ourselves by using the natural resources with which we are blessed: water, land, fertile soil and good climate all year round? This may also be the opportunity for us to feed ourselves, rely less on imported good, promote a healthier lifestyle, and improved the quality of our diet by eating more of what we grow from the soil.

The socioeconomic challenges that confront us result from many intertwined components. There are far too many among us who have chosen crime and violence as a way of life. They prey on the most vulnerable in our communities and disrupt our ability to conduct the business of the nation. There is room in Jamaica for conversations where we can listen to, and understand each other better in order to resolve our disputes without resorting to the use of violence. We have a reputation of being friendly to visitors, so why can't we get along with each other and help each other?

Coupled with crime and violence is the challenge of illiteracy. Many of our fellow citizens and our youths have been stymied in their efforts to earn an honest living by their lack of education, or by their not having the necessary skills and training required to support themselves and their families. Too many children in our society still miss out on a good education because of poor nutrition, sporadic school attendance, and violence within their communities. In an age where information is one of the world's most valuable resources, the lack of education represents a severe drain on our nation's productivity.

We are concerned about the moral turpitude that threatens to destroy the tangible principles on which our nation was founded. We should not sacrifice honesty, integrity, responsibility and trustworthiness for the sake of making money quickly. We must embrace the values that will develop a just society and define us as a people – respect, fairness, punctuality, forgiveness,

sharing, caring and lending a helping hand. These values must remain an indestructible part of the fabric of our nation.

The conditions that pervade Jamaican life scream at us to immediately develop and implement a 'survival package' in defense of our nation, one that will call on the creative genius of all well-thinking Jamaicans in the various sectors of the country. We must 'seize the day' lest like sand in the hour glass, it slips away never to return. Each of us wherever we function, whether it is in the political arena, the public sector, the private sector, in schools or in churches, must get into action now for the sake of this our nation.

The crisis we are experiencing demands that:

1. Those who have left the land return so we can feed ourselves.
2. Tradesmen get back to work.
3. Teachers need to rethink their strategies and keep those boys in school.
4. Leaders in industry and banking, businessmen and entrepreneurs must conduct their business with high moral integrity.
5. Builders, Architects and Engineers become acutely aware that in building physical structures, they are also helping to build the nation.
6. Pastors and Church Functionaries, Doctors and Nurses, should not be weary as they daily minister to the soul and body.
7. Scientists at all levels should persevere in the search for alternative sources of energy, and the variety of other answers their research will disclose.
8. Jamaicans in the Diaspora, who have blessed others with their work ethic, expertise, commitment and education, should faithfully promote the good things about Jamaica so they will have something tangible here when they return.
9. The youths must talk to other youths who understand each other and can respond to positive vibes.

Although it may seem to many persons in Jamaica today that we are in the night of our deepest despair with nothing before us, the night of weeping will not last forever and I prefer to think

that we are approaching the morning of hope with everything before us. We have the tomorrows of opportunities and limitless possibilities ahead of us. The possibilities of achieving our God-given potential with creativity and success – despite the odds.

Our history as a people and a nation beckons to us from within the darkness and reminds us to be steadfast, resilient, and cling to hope for we have overcome much and we will do so yet again. I firmly believe that within the crises of our contemporary experiences lie the seeds of opportunity and renewal.

As St Francis of Assisi urged, all of us should ‘act as if everything depended upon [us]’, and ‘pray as if everything depended upon God’.

At the end of the day, every one of us has to participate in the healing, the restoration, and ultimately, the prosperity of this nation. ‘There is nothing wrong with Jamaica that cannot be fixed by what is right with Jamaica.’

## **COMMITMENT AND CONCLUSION**

My commitment is clear and without equivocation: I will set forth to ‘stir the people of Jamaica’, ‘inspire them to greatness’, and seek their recommitment to building a great society. The well-being and welfare of Jamaica must be our primary concern. We must repair the ills that threaten to divide, separate and destroy us. We must appeal to our better nature and restore mutual respect for each other.

We must return to a value system which ensures that no one is deprived of their God-given rights; where the measure of a real man is not the number of guns he slings, the number of persons he kills, nor the number of children he sires, but the extent to which he cares for and supports his family.

We must engage the youth and adapt to a changing world and the maturing consciousness of our young people. We must believe in them, train them, and have the faith that they will not betray the values of fairness, morality, and justice that we have instilled in them.

I believe that despite our challenges, our setbacks and our despair, we are a nation which has been blessed with a rich heritage, abundant resources, and the prospect of a bright future.

I believe that each of us is placed here by our Creator to enhance the quality of life of those around us.

I believe that the decent, dedicated, hardworking members of our society are in the majority, despite the violence, vulgarity, declining values and economic vicissitudes that confront us.

I believe that Jamaican men and women of every race, color, religion, creed and political affiliation can embrace each other with 'one love, one heart' and solve our differences without violence.

I believe that every Jamaican at home and in the Diaspora can say with sincerity, "I pledge the love and loyalty of my heart, the wisdom and courage of my mind, the strength and vigour of my body in the service of my fellow citizens", in this Island that we call home.

Every Jamaican must know, think, internalize, personalize, and actualize the theme "I believe." It must echo from the Blue Mountains to the Dolphin Head Mountains. It must ring from the Liguanea Plains of Kingston to the St Georges Plains of Westmoreland.

I believe must be etched in every classroom, the screen saver on every computer and cell phone; it must be internalized in the heart of every student, until dreams are born in the hearts of our children as to who they can become and the contribution they can make to the development of their nation.

Businessmen and entrepreneurs, Professors, Pastors, Politicians, and teachers, Managers and Workers, Employers and Employees must echo the certain sound that we are one nation under God. Let it ring from their lips and let them declare that they believe in the destiny of Jamaica.

I believe must adorn the T-shirts we wear, the sports gear that we brand, the cups from which we drink; it must be the theme in the morning papers, and the optimism of the evening news until the waves wash away our shame and we evolve into a nation 'destined for greatness'.

When we examine the global canvas we see lines, brush strokes and hatchings that are distinctively Jamaican. We have produced great thinkers and scholars, artists and musicians, the best athletes, sportsmen and women, and have ensured that the rest of the world believe in this island nation. Others believe in us, we must believe in ourselves!

I believe in Jamaica. I believe in the people of Jamaica. I am committed to doing my best as I carry out my responsibilities. I am confident of the support of my wife and best friend, Patricia, as I uphold the dignity of this Office, and the confidence which has been placed in me.

God bless you, and God bless 'Jamaica, Land we love'.